

USING CENSUSES TO OUR ADVANTAGE

MORE ABOUT YOUR FAMILY'S HISTORY AND MIGRATION

There is a lot of useful, important information in the Census, depending upon the year. The Census is an excellent source to confirm an individual and their family. Many interesting facts about individuals that give insight to situations in their lives on the day of the enumerator visit.

www.archives.gov is one site that has census forms. They can also be located individually on the internet from major genealogy sites.

Censuses prior to 1800 had no standard format. Each state made up their own forms, which were tabulated by each state, and sent to the government for final tabulation for the nation.

There is not just one layout for the Census form for each year. Some years have supplemental schedules for slaves, crop production, and livestock for example. There have been various veteran and widow's schedules.

Unfortunately, most of these schedules were tabulated by the Census Bureau and were then destroyed. A few examples of most schedules are available on-line, or in various genealogical groups or state archives.

1800 was the first standardized form, and recorded minimal information, in a form that challenges the historian. It contained only the Head of Household name. Free white males and females were separated into 5 age groups each. A single column for slaves and "other free persons".

The 1810 form was almost identical to the 1800. In 1820 the government started gathering additional information. Slaves and Freed Colored Persons were divided by age the same as whites. Foreigners, Naturalized, Working in Agriculture, in Commerce, and in Manufacturing.

This form reflects the impact of the Industrial Revolution upon the population's changing makeup and migration. The 1830 form eliminated some of the items from 1820 and was like the 1810.

With the 1840 Census the method of dividing persons was kept, but also counted persons in various occupations. Pensioners of the military were listed individually, as were any persons Deaf and Dumb, Blind, or Insane, Divided by White and Colored. Categories of education and White persons over 20 who could not read or write were listed by name and age.

The 1850 Census is the first where each individual of the family is listed. It is also the first year a Slave Schedule. Only the slave owner's name is given, along with groupings of slaves by age, sex color, fugitive, freed (manumitted) still resident, and Deaf, Dumb, etc. This is the first year that each dwelling, and family within a dwelling are recorded. These were used by the Enumerator, and had no indication of address or unit number.

1850 had the introduction of fields that would be standard for many years. These include age, sex, profession, place of birth, and marital status. A few other statistics were recorded.

1860 is the second Census with Slave Schedule. The enumeration form was similar to the 1850.

1870 brought a number of changes. The standard items (1850), also if either parent was foreign born. Questions also included marriage, education and citizenship.

1880 saw the addition of street name and numbers for cities, relationship to Head of House, Civil Condition, (single, married, etc.), Months worked, health status, education, place of birth for each person, his father, and mother.

1890 Census was mostly destroyed by fire. Some of the interesting supporting schedules do survive on microfilm.

General Population schedules, Schedules of Union Civil War Veterans or widow, Oklahoma territorial schedules, List of selected Delaware African-Americans,

Statistics of Lutheran Congregations, and Statistical information for the entire United States.

1900 asked the standards, plus marital status, years in this marriage, mother of total and living children, Immigration status, Education and Dwelling Ownership.

1910 asked the standards, ability to speak English, employment, education home ownership, Union or Confederate Veteran, blind or dumb.

1920 is like 1910, with the addition of Mother Tongue, Salary or Wage, and Farm Schedule No. Farm Schedules report information concerning various crop and animal production statistics. They have been used since 1850.

1930 In addition to the standard fields the 1930 census focused on areas indicating improved prosperity of the family. Value of property owned or rented, owning a radio, living on a farm, age at 1st marriage, education (including college) since 1929, and ability to read and write, along with employment and veteran's statistics. This year workers were divided into numerous classes.

1940 Persons absent from home included. Indicate person giving information to the Census taker. The fields related to a number of data points dealing with birthplace of parents, veteran status and others were only collected from the persons that fall on lines 14 and 29 of each page in the enumerator's book.

1950 The fields that were collected for only lines 24 and 29 apply to all individuals on the 1950 Census forms. This year's enumeration requires three sheets. A number of work related factors are entered for any person 14 years or older. A special code "AB" is used in Naturalized to denote children of Americans born abroad, or at sea. Some fields have special codes for work "last week".

Records from the 1950 Census are not currently available. They have been digitized by Ancestry.Com, and are now being verified using FamilySearch software. The Federal Government would not allow any work to be done before the scheduled April release date.